

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 NIC-01 AID-20 DRC-01 /134 W

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R 121031Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8032

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC

USSAG

S E C R E T VIENTIANE 2010

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET AMBASSADOR

1. SOVIET AMBASSADOR VALENTIN VDOVINE CALLED ON ME TODAY AT HIS REQUEST TO DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN LAOS. THE AMBASSADOR APPEARED TO BE MOST HOPEFUL WITH REGARD TO THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT AND INFORMED ME THAT THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR, WHOSE ARRIVAL TRADITIONALLY HAS BEEN CLOSELY LINKED TO POLITICAL PROGRESS, WOULD ASSUME HIS DUTIES MARCH 13.

2. AMBASSADOR VDOVINE OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY COMMENTING THAT HE HAD MET WITH PATHET LAO NEGOTIATOR PHOUN SIPRASEUTH YESTERDAY FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO VIENTIANE. THE AMBASSADOR SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE COULD MAKE OUT THERE SEEMED TO BE NOTHING NOW STANDING IN THE WAY OF THE FORMATION OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT. THE QUESTION OF MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS AROUND LUANG PRABANG APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN SETTLED AND PHOUN HAD NOT MENTIONED

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ANY OTHER COMPLICATING FACTORS. I STATED THAT AS FAR AS

WE COULD SEE THE SITUATION SHOULD PERMIT THE EARLY FORMATION OF THE GOVERNMENT. PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA HAD BEEN GLOOMY IN RECENT DAYS REGARDING PROGRESS, BUT I WAS SURE HE WAS BUCKED UP BY PHOUN'S RETURN.

3. THE AMBASSADOR ASKED WHETHER I TOOK SERIOUSLY THE POLITICAL MANEUVERS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND COMMENTED THAT THESE POLITICIANS WERE GIVING THE IMPRESSION THAT THEIR TACTICS WERE APPROVED BY THE AMERICANS. I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS RUBBISH AND THAT IT WAS NONSENSE TO SUPPOSE THAT THERE WAS ANY ADVANTAGE TO MY GOVERNMENT IN HAVING A HANDFUL OF CORRUPT POLITICIANS CAUSE DIFFICULTIES AT THIS TIME. MY CONCERN WITH REGARD TO THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTION WAS THAT THERE WERE RUMORS THAT THE KING MIGHT BE LESS WILLING TO DISREGARD THE ASSEMBLY THAT HE HAD BEEN SOME WEEKS AGO. AMBASSADOR VDOVINE SAID THAT HE HAD HEARD THE SAME RUMORS BUT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE KING WOULD NOT RENEGE ON HIS EARLIER COMMITMENT TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

4. I TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO MENTION THE ABUSIVE AND POLEMICAL BROADCASTS BEING TRANSMITTED BY THE SO-CALLED PATHET LAO RADIO IN HANOI. I SAID THAT I BELIEVED MY GOVERNMENT'S POLICY HAD BEEN MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR AND THAT "COLD WAR" BROADCASTS OF THIS KIND BY THE PATHET LAO WERE NOT CONDUCIVE TO GOOD RELATIONS AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES WHICH I BELIEVED THE AMERICAN AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS SHARED IN LAOS. I SHOWED THE AMBASSADOR SEVERAL TRANSCRIPTS AND HE NOTED THEM.

5. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE AMBASSADOR WAS THAT AMBASSADOR LE VAN HIEN OF NORTH VIETNAM IS TO ARRIVE IN VIENTIANE TOMORROW. HIEN HAS NOT BEEN IN LAOS SINCE 27 MAY 1969. THE AMBASSADOR SAID HIS RETURN IS LINKED WITH THE EARLY ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COALITION GOVERNMENT.

6. IN TYPICAL LAO FASHION, THE ROLLER COASTER OF OPTIMISM IS NOW CLIMBING AGAIN AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF
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GLOOM. I TEND TO BELIEVE THAT THE RETURN OF THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AMBASSADOR WHO WILL BE DEAN OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS IS A MOST ENCOURAGING SIGN.
WHITEHOUSE

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